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ABSTRACT

This report evaluates a joint Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program at Cleveland State University (Ohio) and the University of Akron (Ohio) in which half the courses originate on each campus and students use videoconferencing to participate in all courses. The two-year program, which began in spring 1995, admits approximately 48 students each year. Evaluation found an attrition rate of approximately 19 percent and no differences in learning outcomes, as measured by grades, for students at either the sending or the receiving site. It was concluded that two separate programs enrolling the same number of students would cost about 53 percent more than the joint MSW program. Although a single program at one campus would cost less in total than the joint program, the report finds that such a program could probably accommodate only about 67 percent of the current enrollment at a per student cost about 21 percent higher than the joint program. Individual sections of the report describe: (1) the background and context of the joint program, including course sharing, technology, and program management; (2) benefits of the MSW program in terms of learning outcomes, student access, institutional renewal and growth; and (3) program costs. Five tables detail the study's findings. (DB)

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The Master's Degree in Social Work at Cleveland State University and the University of Akron: A Case Study of the Benefits and Costs of a Joint Degree Program Offered via Videoconferencing

CSU Cleveland State University

The University of Akron

Joint Master of Social Work Program

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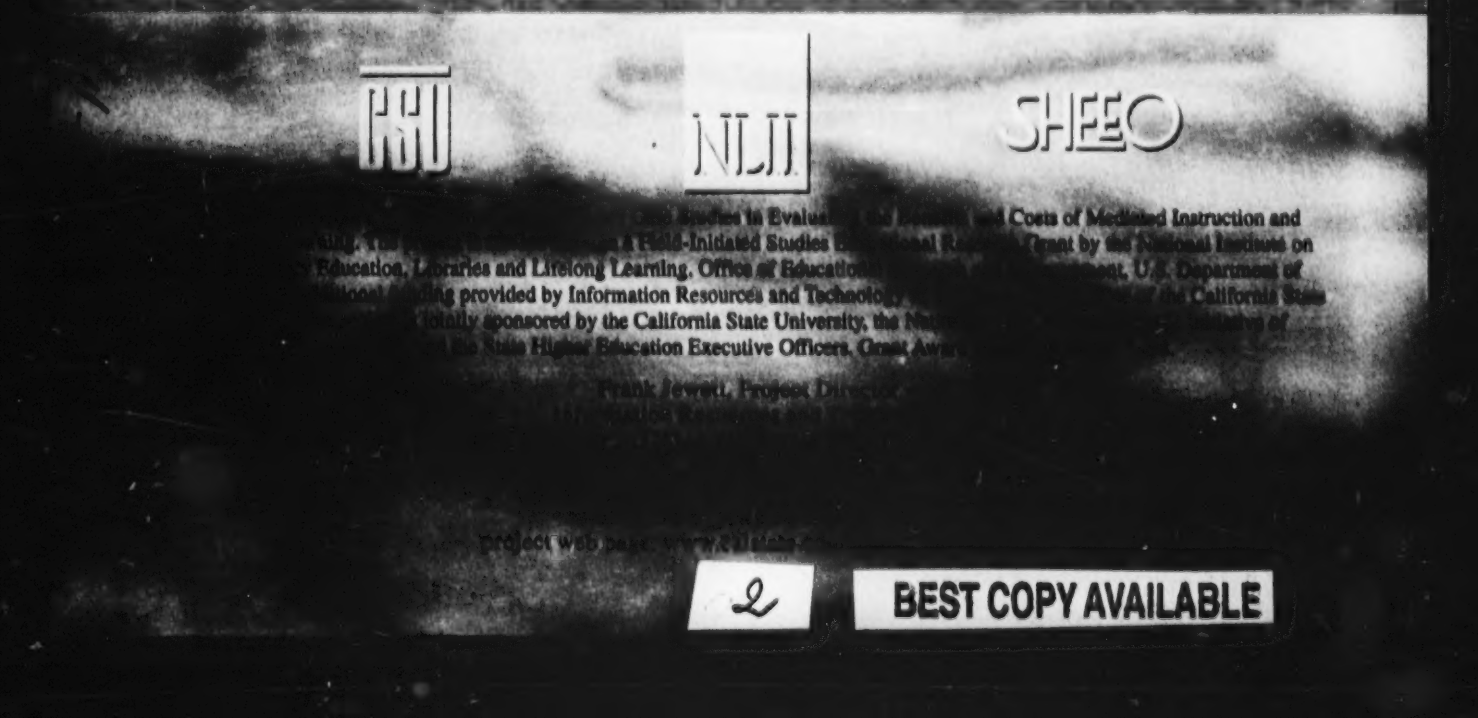
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The Master's Degree in Social Work at Cleveland State University and the University of Akron: A Case Study of the Benefits and Costs of a Joint Degree Program Offered via Videoconferencing

Summary, Findings, and Conclusions

1. The University of Akron (UA) and Cleveland State University (CSU) are large urban institutions located approximately 35 miles from each other in the northeastern part of Ohio. The two universities have developed and are offering a joint graduate program leading to the Master of Social Work degree using interactive videoconferencing as a means to deliver courses between the two campuses.

2. Both have large undergraduate programs in social work and both wanted to develop programs leading to the MSW degree. Two factors initially worked against such a development, however: (i) state policy would have prohibited two such high cost specialized programs at public universities within 50 miles of each other and (ii) the fiscal situation in the early 1990s was such that neither campus could afford to mount its own program even if it were not prohibited by policy.

3. With support from the Board of Regents of the State of Ohio, the two campuses and their Departments of Social Work designed and implemented a joint degree program that originates half of the program's courses on each campus and, using videoconferencing, allows students on both campuses to enroll in all of the courses.

4. The primary goal of the program is to provide affordable access to students in the northeastern region of Ohio who seek a quality Master of Social Work education. The Board of Regents also hopes that this program will provide a model for other similar collaborations between universities in the state. The board and the administrators at both campuses recognize the importance of the program as a means to demonstrate: (1) that two institutions can effectively create and administer a joint degree program that is both educationally and fiscally sound, (2) that students can learn effectively via distance learning technology, (3) that students can accept and be satisfied with the learning environment, (4) that such a program can meet and exceed the expectations of a professional accrediting organization, and (5) that graduating students will have access to better employment and career opportunities as a result of their education.

5. The program consists of 60 semester credit hours taken over a period of two years by full-time students. Because accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is critical to acceptance and value of the degree, the CSWE was contacted

early and its standards were incorporated into program design. The joint program is currently in candidacy with CSWE.

6. Each campus outfitted a classroom with a videoconferencing system that enables visual and audio contact between the two sites at all times. The rooms have essentially the same equipment and were designed so that each location can act as either a "broadcast" or "receive" site. The program was designed on the premise that half the courses would originate from one campus and half from the other. Similarly, each campus provides approximately half of the enrollments for each course. Students, therefore, spend 50 percent of their time in the room with a faculty member when the room is in "broadcast mode" and 50 percent in the room when it is in "receive mode," with no faculty member present.

7. The administrative unit for the joint MSW program consists of the Director, Associate Director, Field Coordinator, and Associate Field Coordinator. The directorship rotates between the two campuses every four years and the Associate Director comes from the opposite campus.

8. The program has an extensive committee structure. The standing committees are: Curriculum, Academic Performance, Admissions, Graduation, Evaluation, Field Education and By-laws. There are monthly joint general faculty meetings (using videoconferencing) and committee reports are made at that time.

9. The MSW program has its own operating budget. Funds for the program come from each institution on an equal share basis.

10. The program has one set of admissions criteria and procedures as determined by the joint Admissions Committee. Potential students apply to the graduate school at the institution of their choice; those who are admitted to the institution's graduate school are then considered by the joint program Admissions Committee.

11. There is an MSW student organization that meets regularly, via videoconferencing, and provides feedback and input to the program's administrators and faculty.

12. Both campuses hired three new full-time faculty members to staff the program and to fulfill the CSWE accreditation requirement of six positions. Although each School of Social Work is responsible for hiring its own faculty, there is consultation between the Personnel Action Committees of both schools when MSW faculty are hired. Once hired, the faculty members are subject to all of the norms of employment at their respective institutions.

13. Although the degree is a joint program, the campuses still operate as independent institutions. Students are initially admitted by one of the campuses and continue to be affiliated with it throughout their course of study. Academic advising is the responsibility of faculty at the home (admitting) campus. Students register for courses and earn course credit at their home campus. Similarly, all FTE credit goes to the enrolling institution no matter where the course originates. Students pay tuition to the home campus, and, if necessary, arrange for payment consistent with local practices. Finally, the MSW degree is awarded by the home campus.

14. Comparisons were made of grade averages for students at sending and receive sites for academic years 1995-96, 1996-97, and for a period from the inception of the program in spring 1995 through spring 1997. The "t" statistic was not significant (5 percent level) in any of the comparisons made. There is no evidence of a difference in learning outcomes, as measured by grades, for students at send or receive sites. By implication

there is no evidence of either a positive or negative effect due to the use of the videoconferencing technology nor of grading bias on the part of the instructors.

15. Approximately 48 students are admitted to the program each year (24 at each campus). Attrition over the two-year span to graduation is approximately 19 percent. In 1997, about 87 percent of the students were female and about 49 percent were minority. Through spring 1997, 39 individuals had graduated from the program (about 81 percent of the first two classes). The graduates were 80 percent female and 39 percent minority.

16. Two separate programs enrolling the same number of students in total as the joint program would cost about 53 percent more than the joint MSW program including the costs of videoconferencing classrooms and communications.

17. A single program at one campus would cost less in total than the joint program. Such a program would not serve the region as well as the joint program, however. It could be expected, at best, to accommodate about 67 percent of the enrollment currently accommodated in the joint program at a per student cost that would be 21 percent higher than the joint program.

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Background and Context

The University of Akron (UA) and Cleveland State University (CSU) are offering a joint graduate program leading to the Master of Social Work degree using interactive videoconferencing technology. This case study considers the benefits and costs of this unique partnership, as well as some of the challenging issues faced when two institutions pool resources to create a single academic program. CSU and UA are both large, public, urban universities located in the northeastern region of Ohio. CSU is approximately 35 miles north of Akron on U.S. Interstate 77. Although the distance is not great, travel between the two cities can be hazardous, especially in the evening and in winter.

There are four accredited MSW programs in the entire state of Ohio. The joint master's degree program that CSU and UA have created represents the only publicly supported MSW program available in northeastern Ohio, and the only program which many placebound students in that region can pursue. There are now over 2,000 individuals in the northeast region of Ohio who have a bachelor's degree in social work from UA or CSU. An additional 150-200 new bachelor's degrees are awarded yearly by the two campuses. The joint MSW program provides an opportunity for these individuals and others to seek the master's degree in social work at the relatively reasonable tuition rates of a state university.

Cleveland State University

As indicated in its mission statement, "Cleveland State University is a comprehensive urban university committed to providing an education of high quality to its students, primarily from the metropolitan area, with diverse backgrounds, experiences, interests and educational needs." Significantly for this case one of the specific goals supporting this mission includes development of new partnerships. The university's 80-acre campus in the metropolitan area of Cleveland has thirty-five buildings used for teaching, research, housing, and recreation. The nineteen-story Rhodes Tower, containing the university library, classrooms, and many faculty offices, is a striking feature of the Cleveland skyline. Approximately 17,000 full- and part-time students pursue the degree programs available through CSU's seven colleges.

The University of Akron

The University of Akron, originally known as Buchtel College, is situated on a hill overlooking the metropolitan area of Akron, Ohio. Founded in 1870 as a small denominational college, it has been transformed over the years into one of the larger publicly assisted universities in the nation with over 25,000 students enrolled in its ten degree granting schools and colleges. Its mission is "... to develop enlightened members of society by offering comprehensive programs of instruction from the associate through the doctoral level; to pursue a vigorous agenda of research; and to provide service to the community. The university pursues excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction...." The university's 170-acre campus is within walking distance of downtown Akron. The university has a long tradition of serving the needs of both part-time and full-time students through day and evening classes; it has successfully attracted both traditional and mature adult students of all economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds.

The Joint Master of Social Work Program

The Joint MS Program in Social Work was started by these two institutions in January 1995 with strong support from the Board of Regents of the State of Ohio. The board was aware of the

need for such a program in the northeastern part of the state, and also knew of the interests of both CSU and UA administrators and faculty in establishing an MSW program. Both universities have strong, accredited undergraduate programs in social work but faced financial constraints that made the launching of a new master's degree program unlikely. While neither institution had the resources to initiate an entire new MSW program, by pooling their departmental resources and faculty, the two universities could make a full MSW program available to students on both campuses. The new program also would have the advantage of drawing on a broader faculty group—deepening the talent pool available and expanding the possible areas of specialization. Teams of faculty and administrators worked together to design a joint program that emphasized the strengths of both departments. It was determined that videoconferencing technology could be used to share courses between the two institutions. The community and prospective students were surveyed to ensure that students' needs were factored into the program design. Although the joint program was launched in a time of crisis when both universities were facing severe cutbacks, it enjoyed leadership support at both institutions.

Consistent with the urban missions of the sponsoring institutions, the joint MSW program was conceived with the objective of preparing advanced level social work practitioners committed to working with oppressed, at risk, and vulnerable populations in northeastern Ohio. The program consists of 60 semester credit hours taken over a period of two years by full-time students. The first year MSW curriculum provides the professional foundation, the second year consists primarily of concentrated coursework for advanced small and large systems practice as well as electives. All MSW students must also complete a field practicum. Because accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is critical to acceptance and value of the degree, the CSWE was contacted early and its standards were incorporated into program design. The joint program is currently in candidacy with CSWE.

The primary goal of the program is to provide affordable access to students in the northeastern region of Ohio who seek a quality Master of Social Work education. The Board of Regents also hopes that this program will provide a model for other similar collaborations between universities in the state. The board and the administrators at both campuses recognize the importance of this program as a means to demonstrate: (1) that two institutions can effectively create and administer a joint degree program that is both educationally and fiscally sound, (2) that students can learn effectively via distance learning technology, (3) that students can accept and be satisfied with the learning environment, (4) that such a program can meet and exceed the expectations of a professional accrediting organization, and (5) that graduating students will have access to better employment and career opportunities as a result of their education.

Course Sharing and Technology Model

To launch the program, each campus outfitted one room with a videoconferencing system that enables visual and audio contact between the two sites at all times. The rooms have essentially the same equipment and were designed so that each location can act as either a "broadcast" or "receive" site. The program was designed on the premise that half the courses would originate from one campus and half from the other. Similarly, each campus provides approximately half of the enrollments for each course. Students, therefore, spend 50 percent of their time in the room with a faculty member when the room is in "broadcast mode" and 50 percent in the room when it is in "receive mode," with no faculty member physically in the room. In practice faculty members arrange to visit the "receive" site about once a month to originate the course from that location and to spend time with the receive site students.

The digitally compressed television signal is shared between the campuses via T-1 lines at 768 kbs per second resulting in very high quality video and audio image. Each "smart room" is equipped with three fixed cameras—an overhead document camera to display print materials, objects, and transparencies; one camera facing the instructor; and one camera facing the students to capture their questions, comments, and reactions. Classrooms are also equipped with three

TV monitors, one of which is used to view the students at the remote location. The rooms are designed to foster an interactive learning environment and to provide ease of use by instructors who produce the broadcast as they teach. Faculty operate the camera controls at the sites obviating the need for a technician to be present throughout the class, although a technician is always on call in the event of difficulties.

Instructors also have access to additional media materials and resources (such as pre-produced videotapes, films, slides, and satellite programming) to enhance their presentations. By the touch of a button on a control panel in the classroom, the instructor can access and display these materials. Guest lecturers from other locations can also be brought into the classroom via the videoconferencing equipment. All faculty members who teach in this program have computers in their offices, and there is a workstation located in the "smart room" that is linked to the university's network system. Outside of class, students communicate with faculty members by fax, phone, and e-mail.

Consistent with the instructional values of the social work departments at both institutions and the fact this is a graduate program, class size is kept relatively small. Each class has a maximum enrollment of 24 students, approximately 12 at each campus. Each fall a new class is admitted. At this time, only full-time study is available through the joint program, although there are plans to develop a structured part-time and advanced standing program at a later date. For the first two years of operation, only an evening program was available. In the fall semester of 1997, a daytime program was also launched, increasing the total number of newly admitted students that semester to approximately 48 (24 at each campus) and doubling the utilization of the videoconferencing rooms.

Using videoconferencing to share a degree program between two campuses has some interesting consequences that often don't hold in a "distance education" situation. Since the courses are shared between two campuses, there is no "remote site" where students take a course remote from a campus. A more accurate description is a "sending" or originating campus and a "receiving" campus. At whichever site a student happens to attend the course, the student is always in a campus environment with access to faculty advisors, a department chair, library resources, and the full range of student support services that are typically available on a campus. Since both sites send and receive, all students at each campus experience both the live classroom (when the course originates from their campus) about half of the time and the receive classroom (when the course originates from the other campus) about half of the time.

Program Management

One of the very interesting aspects of this case is the approach to joint program management. Universities are accustomed to operating independently and this created a significant challenge to the program designers. It appears, however, that effective cooperative arrangements have been developed. There is definitely a commitment to the success of the shared governance of the program at the two sponsoring institutions. In a few key areas each institution retains significant autonomy.

Shared Governance

The administrative unit of the joint MSW program consists of the director, associate director, field coordinator, and associate field coordinator. The directorship rotates between the two campuses every four years and the associate director comes from the opposite campus. The initial directorship is based at CSU and the associate director is at UA. The field coordinator position also rotates every four years. The field coordinator always resides in the same institution as the director to ensure efficiency. In the initial years, the director and associate director have worked very closely in all phases of program administration and decision making. They both characterize this approach as a success.

The program has an extensive committee structure that facilitates participation by faculty members from both institutions. The standing committees as identified in the by-laws of the program are: Curriculum, Academic Performance, Admissions, Graduation, Evaluation, Field Education and By-laws. All committees are representative of both institutions with emphasis on placing equal numbers of faculty members from each university on each committee. Co-chairs, one from each college, lead each committee. There are monthly joint general faculty meetings (using videoconferencing) and committee reports are made at that time.

The MSW program has its own operating budget which is divided into personnel and operating expenses. Funds for the program come from each institution and operating expenses are contributed on an equal basis. The program budget is not charged for overhead expenses such as electricity, space, or heat on either campus. The director is responsible for administering and monitoring the budget, and reviews the overall budget regularly with the associate director.

To facilitate the registration and record keeping process, all courses in the program have one set of course titles, course numbers, and catalog descriptions that are published in the catalogs and course schedules of both campuses.

Students

The program has one set of admissions criteria and procedures as determined by the joint Admissions Committee. Potential students apply to the graduate school at the institution of their choice; those who are admitted to the institution's graduate school are then considered by the joint program's Admissions Committee. Students who are admitted to the program from both campuses participate in a face-to-face orientation that takes place during the summer prior to the beginning of courses. The orientation is designed to introduce students to each other and to the technology that will be used, to brief them on the program requirements and what will be expected of them. Students are further informed of their rights and responsibilities through a Student Handbook and Field Practicum Manual that is provided. There is also a joint MSW student organization that meets regularly, via videoconferencing, and provides feedback and input to the program's administrators and faculty.

Faculty Staffing

The joint MSW program is staffed with six full-time faculty members. The University of Akron and Cleveland State University both hired three additional full-time faculty members for this program. These six new hires fulfill the CSWE requirement. Although each School of Social Work is responsible for hiring its own faculty, there is consultation between the Personnel Action Committees of both schools when MSW faculty are hired. The MSW program faculty assignments are made jointly by the directors of the Schools of Social Work at both institutions. Once hired, the faculty members are subject to all of the norms of employment at their respective institutions. In addition to the faculty dedicated to this program, other faculty members from the Schools of Social Work also teach in the joint MSW program. These faculty members are selected primarily for their particular areas of expertise and motivation to participate. Many faculty were especially motivated to support this program and use the technology because of their desire to bring a master's level program to their institution.

Institutional Autonomy

Although the degree is a joint program, the campuses still operate as independent institutions. Students are initially admitted by one of the campuses and continue to be affiliated with this "home" campus. Academic advising is the responsibility of faculty at the home campus. Students register for courses and earn course credit at their home campus. Similarly, all FTE credit goes to the enrolling institution no matter where the course originates. Students pay tuition to the home campus, and, if necessary, arrange for payment consistent with local practices. Finally, the MSW degree is awarded by the home campus.

Benefits of the MSW Program

Learning Outcomes

Student Performance in Classes

Student grades at receive sites were compared to grades at send sites for the periods 1995-96, 1996-97, and for a period from the inception of the program in spring 1995 through spring 1997. Since all students met identical admissions requirements and about half of each student's program is at a send site and half at a receive site, it is assumed students at the send and receive sites are of equivalent motivation and ability. Consistent differences between sending site grades and receiving site grade averages could arise because of the use of the technology or to a consistent bias on the part of instructors in favor of their local (sending site) students.

Table 1—Comparisons of Grade Averages for Groups of Students in MSW Courses at Send and Receive Sites

	Grade Average (in courses where comparisons were made)	Enrollments (in courses where grade comparisons were made)	Total Course Enrollments
1995-96			
Sending site	3.748	151	230
Receiving site	3.658	159	
"t" statistic	1.801		
1996-97			
Sending site	3.592	212	291
Receiving site	3.574	218	
"t" statistic	0.264		
Spring 95-Spring 97			
Sending site	3.593	447	641
Receiving site	3.589	450	
"t" statistic	0.110		

The "t" statistic is not significant at the 5 percent level in any of the comparisons shown in Table 1. There is no evidence here of a difference in learning outcomes, as measured by grades, for students at send or receive sites. By implication there is no evidence of an effect due to the technology nor of grading bias on the part of the instructors.

Enrollments and Graduates

A current program objective is to admit 48 students per year, 24 at each campus. Since it is a two-year program designed for full-time students, in a given year each campus would ideally have 48 students, half being first year and half second year. In practice, as shown in Table 2 below, some attrition occurs with the result that the class admitted in 1996-97 is 39 students and the 1997-98 class is 43. This implies an attrition rate of about 19 percent overall. Table 2 also shows the ethnic and gender distribution of students. Over 86 percent of the students are female, and 41.5 percent are minority enrollments.

Table 2—Enrollments, Ethnicity and Gender, Spring 1998

Ethnicity/Gender		CSU 97-98 Admits	UA 97-98 Admits	CSU 96-97 Admits	UA 96-97 Admits	Total Enroll.	Percent
African American	Female	5	8	3	6	22	26.8
	Male	1	1	2	-	4	4.9
American Indian	Female	-	1	1	-	2	2.4
Asian	Female	-	1	-	-	1	1.2
Hispanic	Female	1	-	-	2	3	3.7
	Male	1	-	1	-	2	2.4
White	Female	13	8	12	10	43	52.4
	Male	2	1	-	2	5	6.1
Total Female		19	18	16	18	71	86.6
Total Male		4	2	3	2	11	13.4
TOTAL		23	20	19	20	82	100.0

Table 3 provides data on graduates from the first two classes admitted in 1994-95 and 1995-96. Through spring 1997, 39 students have graduated from the program. Here, again, the attrition rates based on the first two classes of 24 students each are 19 percent.

Table 3—Graduates, Ethnicity and Gender

Ethnicity		Graduates 1994-95 and 95-96	Percent
African American	Female	10	25.6
	Male	2	5.1
Hispanic	Female	2	5.1
	Male	1	2.6
White	Female	19	48.7
	Male	5	12.8
Total Female		31	79.5
Total Male		8	20.5
TOTAL		39	100.0

Student Attitudes

The MSW Student Organization has functioned well to provide feedback on policies and procedures as the program has been implemented. Students have appreciated the opportunity provided by the videoconferencing technology to have access to the graduate program. They have accepted the need for the technology and quickly adapted to its use. In materials recently prepared by a faculty member in the program for presentation at a professional meeting, the conclusion was that within two weeks students adopted to the technology and that it had no effect upon the quality of their learning experience.

Student Access

The two campuses draw enrollments from throughout the northeastern region of the state. The Cleveland-Akron consolidated metropolitan statistical area has a population of 2.9 million. The northeastern regional population includes, in addition, the cities of Ashtabula, Warren, Youngstown, Canton, Wooster, and New Philadelphia, which boosts this total to 3.2 million.

As indicated earlier, both universities have large and well established undergraduate programs in social work. Graduates of these programs, most of whom are employed in social work occupations in the region, provide the primary pool of potential students for the MSW program.

Given the nature of the degree program and the clientele that will ultimately be served by its graduates, there has been considerable emphasis on attracting a diverse student population. The program has been successful in this regard. Tables 2 and 3, above, provide data on the

students enrolled and graduates from the program. The students are over 80 percent female, and about 40 percent are from minority groups.

Students admitted to the program are typically older working adults, most of whom have families. Such individuals are typical placebound students who cannot afford to "go away to school." Indeed, a round-trip commute of much more than an hour to attend classes in an otherwise busy day is difficult to manage. Such commutes become even more difficult in the winter months when storms make highway travel more dangerous and uncertain. The shared program provides practical access for students in the northeastern part of the state that simply could not be provided by a single program located at either one of the two campuses.

Institutional Renewal and Growth

Faculty members receive extensive training and orientation to the technology prior to teaching their first course. A primary consideration in instructional design is the creation of an interactive learning environment. Most faculty members report that after an initial orientation period, concerns about the technology become irrelevant. In general, faculty members have indicated that involvement in the joint program is a professionally enriching experience. While the primary focus has been the educational content of the degree program, students and faculty both feel that the focus on technology in this program has enhanced the value of the degree.

The joint MSW program provides a model for the development of partnerships between institutions facing the issues of financial constraints and meeting the needs of changing student populations. As will be discussed below in the section on costs, program sharing of this type is less expensive than establishing independent programs at each campus. Program sharing has a real potential to improve efficiency and better enable the institutions to meet student needs. The program directors see the current approach as a transition between the traditional model and the classroom of the future. They expect to introduce additional elements in the future to provide for more flexibility in the learning environment (a program web site with course home pages having bulletin board, chat room, and e-mail capability).

Costs of the MSW Program

The MSW program could not exist as two separate independent programs on the two campuses. State policy prohibits development of programs of this nature at campuses less than fifty miles apart. In addition, the present funding situation provides no incentive for the universities to independently implement their own programs even if they were not prohibited by policy.

Nevertheless, for purposes of making cost comparisons, cost estimates for separate programs in various configurations are derived based upon the projected costs for the joint program. These cost estimates are shown in Table 4 and explained in detail below.

Column (1) of Table 4 is based upon the actual 1996-97 budget allocation for the joint MSW program.[1] Column (2) represents one campus's 50 percent share of the joint program costs. Note that in addition to operating costs, the joint program is also charged with an allocated capital cost of $50,000 (see row 12) that represents the annual value of the two studio classrooms valued at approximately $100,000 each and with a useful life of four years.[2] The joint program has an annual cost of over one million dollars and a cost per student of $12,087.

Column (3) shows cost estimates for two separate MSW programs. Costs are based upon an enrollment of 86 which is the enrollment of the joint program. Administrative salary costs (row 1) are based upon the cost of two half-time directors. Instructional salaries and professional conferences (rows 2 and 3) are double the costs of the joint program because each campus must have the same complement of course offerings and faculty as the joint program in order to meet accreditation standards. The costs of professional conferences also doubles because there are twice as many faculty. Communications costs (row 4) are substantially reduced compared to the joint program because two-way video conferencing is not necessary with separate programs. Instead it is assumed that individual campus communications costs would be approximately $1,000. Institutional membership (row 5) is double the joint program cost because two memberships are required. All remaining operating items, classified wages through maintenance costs (rows 6-10), are the same as those of the joint program on the rationale that the same number of students on the two campuses should generate the same costs without regard to whether they are enrolled in a single joint program or two separate programs.

[1] Source: personal communication with Maggie Jackson, April 10, 1997.

[2] The amount is for equipment costs only; the room cost would be the same for either the joint or separate programs and is omitted from the calculation.

Table 4—Estimated Costs of the MSW Program Offered in Various Configurations

	(1) Joint MSW Program	(2) One Campus's 50% Share of Joint MSW	(3) Two Separate MSW Programs	(4) One MSW Program at One Campus	(5) One MSW Program at One Campus
Number of Students	86 (current)	43 (half of 86)	86 (43 @ each)	86 (max. enr.)	58 (best est.)
Operating costs:					
1. Administrative Salaries	$50,000*	$25,000	$66,600**	$33,300**	$33,300**
2. Instructional Salaries (9 mo.)	550,000	275,000	1,100,000	550,000	550,000
3. Professional Conferences	44,000	22,000	88,000	44,000	44,000
4. Communications	16,000	8,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
5. Institutional Membership	3,500	1,750	7,000	3,500	3,500
6. Classified Wages	65,000	32,500	65,000	65,000	43,837
7. Graduate Assistants	58,000	29,000	58,000	58,000	39,116
8. Graduate Tuition Grants	200,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	134,884
9. Supplies	2,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	1,349
10. Maintenance Costs	1,000	500	1,000	1,000	674
11. Total Operating Costs	$989,500	$494,750	$1,589,600	$957,800	$851,660
12. Allocated Capital Costs (video-conferencing equipment)	50,000	25,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13. Grand Total Costs	$1,039,500	$519,750	$1,589,600	$957,800	$851,660
14. Cost per Student	$12,087	$12,087	$18,484	$11,137	$14,684

* *Half-time director and quarter-time assistant director*

** *Half-time directors(s) only.*

The total estimated cost of the two programs is $1,589,600; the cost per student is $18,484 or about 53 percent more than the joint program which amply demonstrates the cost rationale for the joint program.

Column (4) shows the cost of one MSW program at one campus on the assumption that one campus could generate the same total enrollment as the joint program or two separate programs. Here, administrative salaries (row 1) are less because only one director is needed. Instructional salaries and professional conferences (rows 2-3) are the same as for the joint program because this case is also a single program. Communications costs (row 4) are less than column (3) because this is a single program that is not involved with videoconferencing. All other operating costs (rows 5-10) are the same as for the joint program because, again, there is the same number of students.

Total cost of this configuration is $957,800; the per student cost is $11,137 or about 8 percent less than that of the joint program. Thus, the least expensive alternative on a cost per student basis would be to serve the same number of students as the joint program with a single program on one of the campuses. The important question, however, is whether one program on one campus could attract the same number of students as the joint program offered on two campuses.

Based upon the judgment of the MSW program directors, and given the region's population distribution, climate, and cultural attitudes within the two large cities that are 35 miles apart, it is highly likely that 25 percent of the students now attending one of the campuses under the joint program would attend the other campus if the program were offered only at the other site, and the proportion might be as high as 33 percent. It is judged unlikely that the proportion would be as high as 50 percent. Table 5 shows that the total enrollments for a single program under these assumptions would range between 54 and 65. Given what is known about the situation, the middle enrollment value of 58 is perhaps the best estimate. It is used to re-estimate the cost of a single program in column (5) of Table 4.

Column (5) of Table 4 was estimated as follows: values in rows 1-5 are the same as column (4) because these are the minimal requirements for the MSW; rows 6-10 of column (4) were adjusted downward by multiplying them by the ratio of the enrollment values (58/86 = 0.6744) on the rationale that for these cost categories a smaller enrollment would incur a proportionately smaller cost.

A single program operated at an enrollment of 58 has a total cost of $851,660, the lowest total cost of any of the alternatives considered here. Per student cost is $14,684, about 21 percent higher than that of the joint program.[3] This configuration has the lowest total cost but it is obtained by reducing program access within the region and at a higher cost per student. Thus, even if the joint program is more expensive than a single program at one campus, the joint program is still less expensive (more efficient) on a per student basis under a reasonable set of assumptions about what enrollments would be for the single campus program. And, in addition, the joint program serves a larger region and provides access for a larger group of students.

[3] An estimate of column (5) program costs with enrollment at 65, as shown in the last row of Table 5, is $878,196 with an average per student cost of $13,511, which is still 11 percent more than the average costs of the joint program.

Table 5–Estimated Enrollments If Only One of the Two Campuses Offered the MSW Program

	First Year Enrollment	Second Year Enrollment (80%)	Total Enrollment
Joint MSW Program	48	38	86
One Campus in the Joint MSW Program	24	19	43
Single Campus, Single Program:			
If 25% attended from the other site (+6)	30	24	54
If 33% attended from the other site (+8)	32	26	58
If 50% attended from the other site (+12)	36	29	65